

OXYCONTIN: PROTECT YOUR TEENS. GET THE FACTS!

What is OxyContin?

OxyContin is a drug prescribed by physicians to treat moderate to severe pain. While prescription drugs may be helpful if they are used properly, taking OxyContin without a doctor's approval and supervision can be highly addictive and dangerous.

Although OxyContin is a prescription drug, it is also a narcotic (opiate) like heroin. People who get addicted to OxyContin often switch to heroin.

Among teens, OxyContin is also known as Oxy or OC.

Prescription drug misuse is more common than you think...



One out of five teens admits they have taken a prescription drug without a doctor's prescription.



Every day 2,500 youth age 12-17 abuse a pain reliever for the very first time.



People who are dependent on alcohol are 18 times more likely to misuse prescription drugs than non-drinkers.

Prescription drugs that can be abused include:

Pain relievers (like Percocet or Vicodin)

Stimulants (like Adderall or Ritalin)

Sedatives and tranquilizers (like Valium or Xanax)

There are many medications that can be abused.

These are the most common. For questions, call the Massachusetts Substance Abuse and Education Helpline. 1-800-327-5050 (TTY 1-888-448-8321).

"Experimenting, I discovered I could get high on OxyContin... I got to a point where I abused any prescription drug, even my parents'."

– Youth, 19 years old, Dorchester MA

How can I protect my children?



Keep all medications in a secure location, hidden or in a locked box. Unused or expired prescriptions should be discarded according to local or federal safe drug disposal guidelines.



Show your children how you want them to act by what you do and say about prescription drugs and over the counter (OTC) medications. Knowing that you would be upset if they misuse them will help keep teens away from prescription drugs.



Establish a clear rule that they will not take or use anyone else's medications, or any other drugs.



Monitor the use of medicines, and of the internet.

MORE
INFORMATION
ON BACK!

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What can happen when teens misuse OxyContin?

- !** **Physical dependence.** Dependence develops quickly. The body adapts to the presence of OxyContin and goes through serious symptoms when use is reduced abruptly.
- !** **Severe symptoms when use is stopped**, including restlessness, muscle and bone pain, insomnia, diarrhea, vomiting, cold flashes, and involuntary leg movements.
- !** **Repeated use will lead to addiction to OxyContin.** Heroin addiction often follows.
- !** **You will notice changes in your teen's social, emotional and family life.**
- !** **Changes in breathing that can lead to death.**

In an emergency, call 9-1-1.

How do I recognize prescription drug abuse?

- ✓ Your teen has drugs (like pills) for unlikely reasons**
- ✓ You notice prescription drugs are missing**
- ✓ Your teen visits websites where he or she can purchase drugs or learn about drug use**
- ✓ You notice changes in your teen's social behavior**

"When I ask teen addicts where they found their pills, many say they were their parents' prescriptions or that a friend gave them the pills."

- Drug Counselor, Dorchester MA

How can I learn more?

Visit the Bureau of Substance Abuse Services, Massachusetts Department of Public Health website at www.mass.gov/dph/bsas

Request free guides for parents and youth from the Massachusetts Health Promotion Clearinghouse, at www.maclearinghouse.com or call 1-800-952-6637 (TTY: 1-617-536-5872).

Get Confidential help:

If you are worried about a child, friend, or family member who may be abusing OxyContin, alcohol or other drugs, call the Massachusetts Substance Abuse Information and Education Helpline at 1-800-327-5050 (TTY: 1-888-448-8321) or visit www.helpline-online.com.

Confidential help is available in multiple languages, 7 days a week. Help may be available even if you do not have insurance.



Prevent • Treat • Recover • For Life

www.mass.gov/dph/bsas